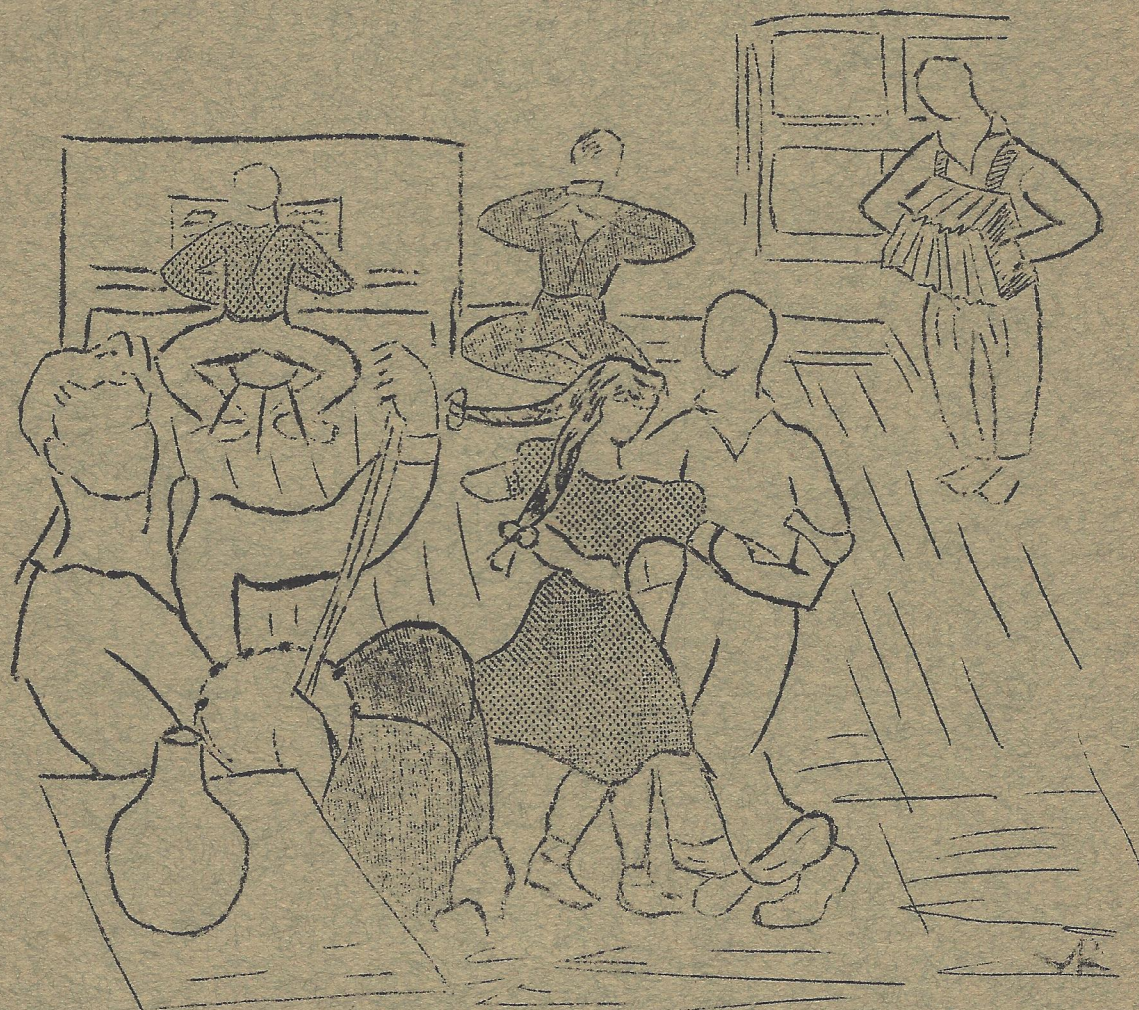


RAMBLER

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN FOLK LORE



AMERICAN SQUARE DANCE GROUP

MARGOT MAYO

LEADER

3/8



PROMENADE

Official Organ of the American Square Dance Group

"The purpose of the American Square Dance Group shall be to make available those rich stores of native dance, music, drama and general Americana which together comprise American Folk Culture; to conduct such activities without regard for race, color, creed, social position; to cooperate with all who sincerely entertain similar views."

---A.S.D.G. Constitution

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The summer issue of Promenade was so full of good-byes and departures that it made us quite sad. We hope we can get out the October issue before there are any more departees. Incidentally, getting out Promenade is really an experience worth living through at least once, for it is a strange and secret process wondrous to behold. We frequently feel like inviting our readers and subscribers down to the studio, handing them a booklet of ten blank pages, and saying to them, "Here, get out your own issue." But that is only in our darkest moments: when the mimeograph machine is acting temperamental; the typewriter insists on skipping letters; what we thought was a ream of white paper turns out to be salmon-colored; the ink bottle suddenly and for no apparent reason runs dry; our feet are killing us; our eyes are aching; our minds are more blank than usual.

You see, Promenade material is kept in a room where musicians check their instruments, and one must constantly dodge double basses, kettle drums, trombones, etc. Then, too, we usually work on Saturday afternoons, after two and a half hours of dancing with the Junior Division of the ASDG, and before the four hour session of Open House. Even our working clothes are weird and wonderful; Judy crawls into a tremendous smock; Vita arrives in slacks; and Margot slides into a pair of men's shoes that have been lying around the studio for months. The way the shoes fit her always reminds us of the tall tale where the men are shingling the roof in the fog and find that they have shingled four feet beyond the actual roof. You know the story and its many variations.

Then, when you think you're all through cutting the stencils and you're ready to mimeograph, some smart-alecky intellectual comes in and triumphantly screams, "Aha, a mistake in spelling;" or "You forgot a comma here."

But, we're not complaining, for we really enjoy working on this crazy magazine. We only hope you can laugh along with us and not at our mistakes. And when the gang of juniors gets going around like the assembly line at a factory, singing and assembling pages of Promenade, while two other members are stapling pages together, and two others are sticking finished issues into envelopes, we really do have fun.

So, if you ever receive a blank copy of Promenade, just accept it as an invitation to come down and join in the mad manoeuvrings. But, seriously, we like to have our readers and subscribers keep in touch with us, to have their criticisms, suggestions and contributions. So please, those of you who haven't already done so, write us; phone us, or better still, come in and see us. We are always anxious to know how we can better Promenade and make it answer the needs of our readers.

DON'T MISS THIS BALLET:
"RODEO"
or
The Courting at Burnt Ranch

This is the first time in the three years that "Promenade" has been in existence that we have felt a contribution of the theater dance of such importance to folk art to deserve a review in our exclusively folksy magazine. Of course, Jane Dudley's "Harmonica Breakdown" and Sophie Maslow's "Dust Bowl Ballads" are favorites of ours, and we have always considered these dances a step in the right direction as far as the modern dance is concerned. But, important as these dances are, the most exciting event in the dance world, this season, is the presentation of Agnes de Mille's "Rodeo."

Danced by the members of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, "Rodeo" is the most stimulating ballet we have ever had the pleasure of seeing. There have been new ballets presented in the last few seasons which have been innovations as far as subject matter is concerned but "Rodeo" is the first truly American ballet.

The music, composed by Aaron Copeland, is based on authentic American folk tunes and has the robust vigorous character of genuine folk music. There is a hauntingly beautiful waltz - really a waltz quadrille - which has a hushed, lyrical quality in both the dancing and the music. Mr. Copeland has intertwined fiddle tunes, reels, and folk songs into a score which is not merely a background for the dancing but which is an integral part of the whole ballet.

The theme of the ballet is certainly human: "It deals with the problem that has confronted every woman of America, from the earliest pioneer times and which has never ceased to occupy them throughout the history of the building of our country: How to get a suitable man." Miss de Mille, in her choreography and in her dancing, shows a warm understanding of human beings, and this sympathy extends across the footlights. Somehow, you felt a little more friendly toward your neighbors after seeing "Rodeo." You found yourself in a "Howdy" sort of mood.

The printed program itself indicates the folksy character of the dance. Instead of typical, ephemeral ballet titles like "The Swan" or "The Faun" the characters' names are genuine and familiar: Caller, Head Wrangler, Cowgirl, and Her Eastern Friends from Kansas City.

Casimir Kokitch played the Head Wrangler, the man who "wasn't got." Fred-eric Franklin was the Champion Roper and to his magnificent dancing added something rarely seen in ballet: real acting. Miss de Mille turned in an indescribable performance as the unforgettable cowgirl who finally got her man. It was very easy (and gratifying) to see that the rest of the Corps de Ballet felt a personal interest in the success of the performance. They added spirit, something which is often sorely needed in Ballet.

The subject matter in "Rodeo" and the way it was handled indicate the opening of a new field in ballet dancing. The spotlight is no longer on the traditional prima ballerina; the conception of the dance is more important.

(continued on next page)

RODEO
(continued from preceeding page)

The background of the ballet is a ranch in the Southwest, depicting first a rodeo in the corral in which the ranch-hands show off their riding ability, and then the square dance in the ranch house. In an interlude, Miss de Mille presents a square dance, a real one, with calls, and done to what we call, down home, "ratting (the clapping of hands to set a rhythmic background when no music is used)." All the figures the dancers used were authentic as were the calls. It was like old home week to the members of the ASDG in the audience, for we too, on several occasions, have danced square dances on the stage of the Metropolitan (needless to say, not with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo).

That "Rodeo" has a universal appeal was apparent in the reaction of the audience and the ovation received was well-earned. Even the members of the ballet corps seemed to enjoy every minute of the performance and their good humour was contagious.

And it was obvious, too, that the dancers in the troupe have tremendous esteem and affection for Miss de Mille. We were so carried away by the whole performance, the dancing, the theme of the ballet, the music, the democratic spirit which is so unusual in the traditional ballet, that we immediately arranged to meet Miss de Mille.

We were a little frightened, now knowing exactly what to expect. But Miss de Mille was exactly like "Rodeo," stimulating, beautiful, sincere and straightforward. It was impossible to get her to talk about herself, she was so full of enthusiasm for everything and everybody. She was excited about "Rodeo," thrilled that it had been so successful, appreciative of the cooperation of the members of the ballet corps.

Miss de Mille has always loved folk-lore and has studied the native folk culture of the various lands in which she has travelled. Whenever possible she attends square dances in this country to pick up new dance figures. When we asked her what she would like us to say to our out-of-town readers, she replied, "Just tell them we're coming out soon!"

While we are on the subject of Miss de Mille, let us add to our appreciation of her as a dancer (and our gratitude to her for the magnificent work of art that is "Rodeo") our appreciation of her truly democratic attitude toward her fellow dancers, her warm and understanding personality.

So, let us repeat, don't miss "Rodeo;" you will enjoy every minute of it and as soon as it is finished you will want to see it over again. We were sorry it was not the last ballet on the program, for after such an exciting performance anything else was bound to be anti-climactic.

M. M.



ADIRONDACK QUADRILLE

(collected by Stuart and Don Jamieson)

This quadrille is always done as the first of any set of three dances.

FORMATION: square set

Music: "Smash the Windows" found in Vol. III, no. 5

INTRODUCTION: Slide left

CALLS:

- 1) Heads forward and back
- 2) Balance four
- 3) Two ladies chain
- 4) Half promenade across
- 5) Walk back

CHORUS:

- 6) Allemande left
- 7) Grand right and left

sides repeat all.....

DESCRIPTION:

- 1) The head couples move forward and back to place
- 2) Face partners and cross hands, Slide sideways to opposite's place, gents passing back to back, Slide back, ladies back to back.
- 3) The two head ladies join right hands, then give the opposite your left hand, the ladies moving forward and the backwards. This is repeated back to place.
- 4) Same as the first part of 2
- 5) Walk back across the set to place.
- 6) All four gents face the lady on the left, giving her their left hand, walk around her and back to place giving their partners their right hand, the next lady in line their left hand, the next their right and so on passing your partner by and continuing around the ring until you reach home.

This last explanation was both the allemande left and grand right and left figure.

DUCK AND DIVE

(collected by Don and Stuart Jamieson in the Adirondacks)

FORMATION: square set

MUSIC: "Red River" in Vol.3,no.7 or "The Wagoner" in Vol.3,no.6

CALLS:

- 1) Heads to the right and circle four half way 'round
- 2) Duck and Dive
- 3) Swing to place

CHORUS:

- 4) Allemande left
- 5) Grand right and left
sides repeat 1-5
heads repeat 1-5
sides repeat 1-5

DESCRIPTION:

- 1) The two head couples go out to the right and circle halfway around.
- 2) The number one couples ducks under the arch of couple two and couple three ducks under the arch made by couple four, alternating "over and under" until you reach home.
- 3) Swing your partner in place.
- 4) All four gents face the lady on the left and giver her your left hand walk around her bcak to place giving your partner your right hand, the next lady in line your left hand and so on around the passing your by and meeting her back in place.
- 1) The sides go out to the right and repeat figure one except that couple three goes under the arch of couple two and couple four goes under the arch of couple one this time ducking and diving all the way down the hall forming one long line of all the sets.

(repeat through 5)

This time the heads go out to the left and couple two goes under three and one goes under four.

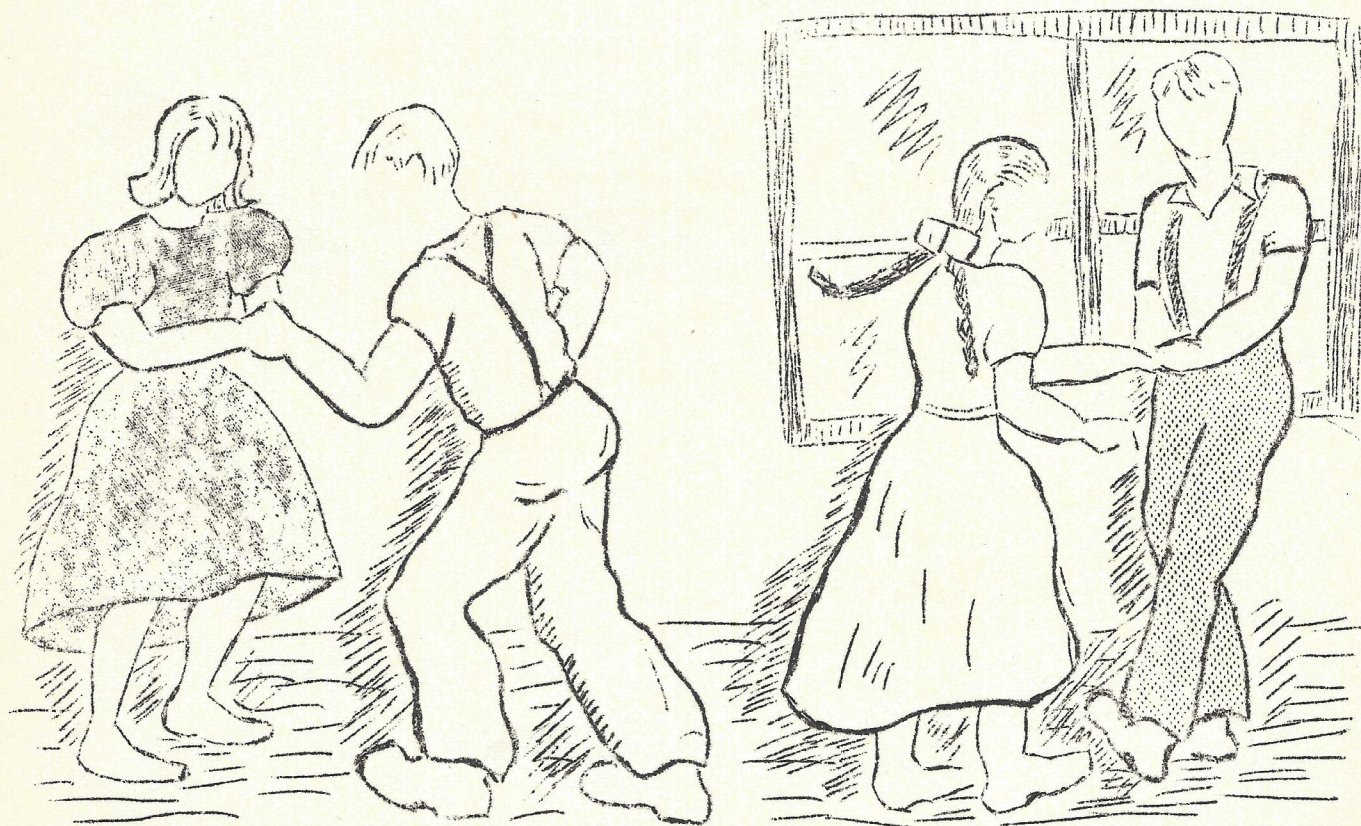
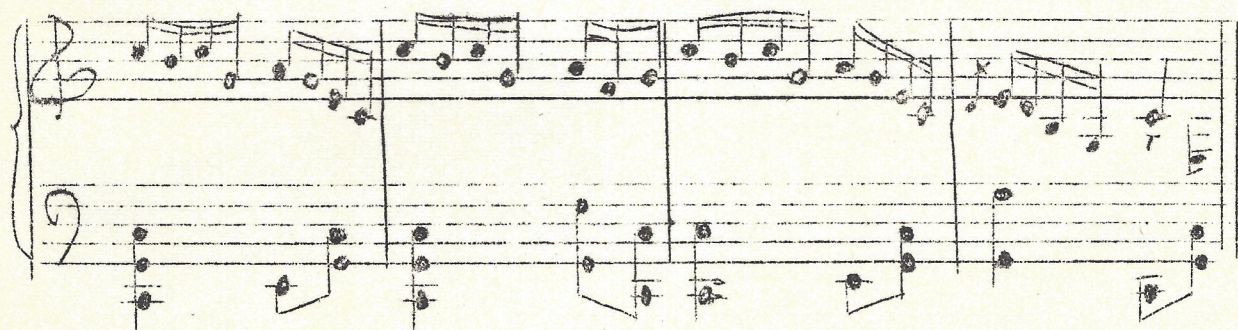
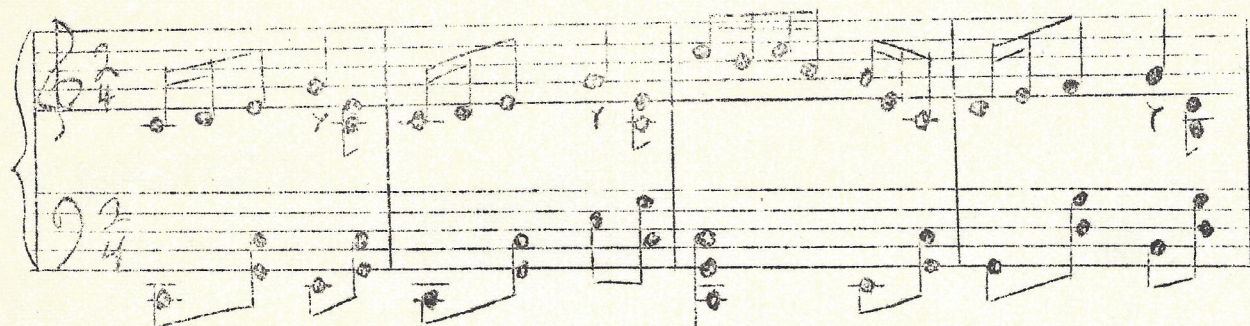
(repeat through 5)

The sides go out to the left and couple four goes under two and three goes under one all the way down the hall as in the second time.

(repeat through 5 again)

OLD MILL BROKE DOWN

(collected by Alan Swartz from the playing of Willie Thigpen,
Swainesboro, Georgia)



"Allemande Left"

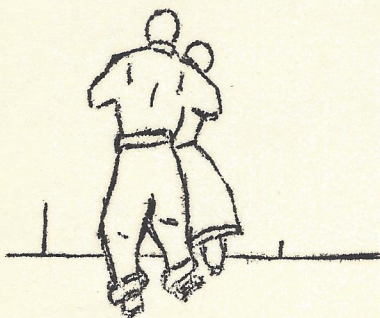
NOTES OF INTEREST

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OF YOUR CHANGE OF ADDRESS

We have always maintained that the study of American (and foreign) folk lore is of great importance in education and that the knowledge gained from such a study can be put to a wide variety of uses. To prove our point take a look at the "People's Festival in a People's War" of the Third Annual Folk Festival of the Catskills, a booklet reviewing the Folk Festival at Camp Woodland, Phoenicia, N.Y.

The booklet contains many articles on camp activities, photographs of the Festival and words and music to some of the folk songs presented. Its well-organized presentation of American Folk Lore demonstrates effectively what cooperation and a feeling of genuine interest can accomplish in this field.



The ASDG appeared recently at Fort Dix for a USO benefit. It was really thrilling to see such a large number of boys and girls (200 or more) out on the floor in a huge "running set." Unfortunately, right in the middle of this dance there was a blackout which lasted over three quarters of an hour. Just our luck! We felt better when we returned to the city and learned that all New York and New Jersey had been blacked out and not just the vicinity surrounding the USO where we were performing.

The ASDG also appeared at the Stage Door Canteen and in spite of limited space a large number of the audience joined in with us. We have noticed that wherever there are soldiers and sailors there are always some who play musical instruments and who know square dance tunes, cowboy songs, etc. Whenever we take along guitars or harmonicas these boys attach themselves almost hungrily to the instruments and seem to derive great pleasure out of playing along with our musicians. We wish we could provide more instruments for them and humbly suggest that organizations such as the USO provide these for the boys.

The ASDG also danced for and with the guests of the Women's Victory League. There soldiers and sailors proved that square dancing is a very popular form of recreation. Some of the boys who danced with us there attended our last Open House and at that OPEN HOUSE was a sailor who showed up the next night at the Stage Door Canteen to dance with us again. So you see...

The Kamin Bookshop, which is a never-failing source of material for book-loving dancers and musicians has moved to 1365 Sixth Ave., N. Y. C.

